

PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

January 29, 2004

04-001

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This newsletter provides information on the PharmaCare program for British Columbia's community pharmacists. Please circulate among dispensing staff.

*PharmaCare on the Web:
www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/pharme*

Staffing Changes

Effective immediately, Suzanne Solven is Acting Executive Director of PharmaCare with full program responsibility. Lynda Chiu is Acting Senior Pharmacist. Questions regarding the drug benefit formulary or drug submissions should be forwarded to Darlene Arenson, Pharmacy Consultant.

Nerys Hughes has retired after nearly 35 years of government service, most of it with PharmaCare. Paul Chazottes has assumed the position of Director, PharmaCare Operations.

Clarification - Super Category Codes

As announced in the PharmaCare Newsletter 03-012 (December 29, 2003), PharmaCare has implemented new drug categories called "super categories."

By entering a super category code in PharmaNet, when a Special Authority (SA) request for a medication within one of these super categories is approved, the patient is automatically eligible for SA coverage of other medications within the same super category (i.e., those that have the same SA criteria). If the patient later requires another medication in the super category, no additional SA request is necessary.

This assists physicians, pharmacists and the public when a change in a Special Authority (SA) medication is required.

For example, if PharmaCare approves an SA request from a physician for an angiotensin-receptor-blocker (ARB), and the patient later requires the hydrochlorothiazide combination product, the physician will only need to write a new prescription. A new SA request is not required.

Correction: Please note that Low Molecular Weight Heparins (LMWHs) were inadvertently listed as medications included in a super category. We apologize for this error.

As LMWHs are usually prescribed for short-term use, entry of a super category code would offer no advantage. SAs for these medications continue to be granted for the specific medication requested only.

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PharmaCare Desk Audits 2004

PharmaCare Audit will be completing several hundred desk audits in the next 12 to 14 months.

What is a desk audit? It usually involves the audit of a specific issue that is conducted by mail, telephone or fax communication to the pharmacy manager, rather than by a visit to the pharmacy.

These audits will primarily concern quantity errors relating to Remicade[®], Rebetrone[®], Didrocal[®], Enbrel[®], and Desmopressin[®]. For more information on correct quantities, refer to *Section 4.7* of the *PharmaCare/PharmaNet Policies and Procedures* manual. The Remicade[®] desk audit has an actual acquisition cost component. The audit group will batch all letters for a specific pharmacy into a single package. Letters concerning large recovery amounts will be sent individually and in advance of the batching process.

Many pharmacies have already participated in desk audits in the last couple of years (for Clozaril[®], Needles and Syringes or the UF Code audit). Some pharmacies may also have received audit letters regarding unusual claims that require further information.

A typical desk audit begins with a letter, addressed to the pharmacy manager, requesting that information and documentation (photocopies) be sent to the auditors. Alternatively, the first letter may address an error identified in the claims data, which necessitates a recovery. In this case, the letter will contain background information and any calculations.

Pharmacies have 30 days to respond to the first letter, allowing enough time to gather the requested documentation, provide additional documentation to support a change in the recovery amount, or to pay the recovery amount. At this stage, to assure accurate results, it is important that the pharmacy provide the auditor with as much information/documentation as possible.

Depending on the outcome of the first letter, the auditor may follow-up with the pharmacy manager by phone or by sending a second letter. If the issue has not been resolved in the pharmacy's initial response, the second letter will contain calculations (revised, if necessary) and a recovery amount. When the issue is resolved, the auditor will send a thank you letter and close the file.

Special Services Fees

The number of special services fees paid for by PharmaCare over the past months are:

DATE	NO. OF FEES
Mar 2003	2,901
Apr 2003	3,145
May 2003	2,941
Jun 2003	3,183
Jul 2003	3,381

DATE	NO. OF FEES
Aug 2003	3,086
Sept 2003	3,729
Oct 2003	3,941
Nov 2003	3,598
Dec 2003	3,932

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Benefits

The following new products have been included as eligible PharmaCare benefits on Plans B, C, F, and I:

DIN	MAN	DRUG NAME	Short Term	Long Term	Plan G Eligible	Palliative Care Eligible
2246594	GPM	Gen-Citalopram Tab 20mg	N	Y	Y	Y
2246595	GPM	Gen-Citalopram Tab 40mg	N	Y	Y	Y
2247162	AZC	Crestor [®] (rosuvastatin) 10mg tablet	N	Y	N	N
2247163	AZC	Crestor [®] (rosuvastatin) 20mg tablet	N	Y	N	N
2247164	AZC	Crestor [®] (rosuvastatin) 40mg tablet	N	Y	N	N

Non Benefits

PharmaCare's Drug Benefit Committee recently completed the review of the following products and recommended that these not be added as benefits under the program:

DIN	MAN	DRUG NAME
2247520	AVP	Ketek [®] (telithromycin) 400mg tablet
2245272	AVP	Amaryl [®] (glimepiride) 1mg tablet
2245273	AVP	Amaryl [®] (glimepiride) 2mg tablet
2245274	AVP	Amaryl [®] (glimepiride) 4mg tablet

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LCA Updates:

New LCA Categories

Please be advised that the following drugs will be included as New LCA Categories on PharmaNet, effective March 1, 2004:

New Category (Chemical Name)	DIN	MAN	Brand Name	LCA Status: Full / Partial	LCA Price
Citalopram Hydrobromide Tab 20mg	2246594	GPM	Gen-Citalopram Tab 20mg	F	
	2239607	VLH	Celexa Tab 20mg	P	\$0 9081
Citalopram Hydrobromide Tab 40mg	2246595	GPM	Gen-Citalopram Tab 40mg	F	
	2239608	VLH	Celexa Tab 40mg	P	\$0 9081
Estradiol Patch 50mcg	2246967	RXP	*Rhoxal-Estradiol Derm 50	F	
	2204428	NVR	*Vivelle 50mcg	P	\$1 7697
Estradiol Patch 75mcg	2246968	RXP	*Rhoxal-Estradiol Derm 75	F	
	2204436	NVR	*Vivelle 75mcg	P	\$1 8994
Estradiol Patch 100mcg	2246969	RXP	*Rhoxal-Estradiol Derm 100	F	
	2204444	NVR	*Vivelle 100mcg	P	\$1 9980

*Requires Special Authority

Drugs under Review

The following drug submissions are currently under review by the Drug Benefit Committee of PharmaCare. These drug submissions are also under the review of the permanent national Common Drug Review process as noted.

alfuzosin (XATRAL® 10mg tabs), resubmission	methadone hydrochloride (METADOL® 1mg, 5mg, 10mg and 25mg tabs)
almotriptan (AXERT® 6.25mg and 12.5mg tabs) – Common Drug Review	methylphenidate hydrochloride (CONCERTA® tabs)
anakinra (KINERET® 150mg/ml Injection)	mirtazapine (REMERTON RD™ 15mg, 30mg and 45mg orally disintegrating tabs)
betahistine dihydrochloride (SERC® 24mg tabs)	norelgestromin 6.0mg and ethinyl estradiol 0.60mg (EVRA® transdermal system) – Common Drug Review
botulinum toxin (BOTOX® Injection), new indication	oxcarbazepine (TRILEPTAL® 150mg, 300mg, 600mg tabs)

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brimonidine tartrate (ALPHAGAN® 0.15% ophthalmic solution)	peginterferon alfa-2a (PEGASYS® 180mcg/0.5ml pre-filled syringes and 180mcg/1ml single use vials)
brimonidine tartrate 0.2%/ timolol maleate 0.5% (COMBIGAN® ophthalmic solution) – Common Drug Review	perindopril erbumine (COVERSYL® 8mg tabs)
ciprofloxacin (CIPRO XL® 500mg modified release tabs)	perindopril erbumine/indapamide (PRETERAX® 2mg/0.625mg tabs)
clopidogrel (PLAVIX® 75mg tabs), new indication	pimecrolimus (ELIDEL® 1% cream)
desmopressin (DDAVP® tabs), resubmission	pioglitazone (ACTOS® 15mg, 30mg and 45mg tabs), resubmission
donepezil (ARICEPT® 5mg and 10mg tabs), resubmission new data	risedronate sodium (ACTONEL® 5mg tabs), resubmission
etanercept (ENBREL® injection), new indication	risperidone (RISPERDAL M-TAB® 0.5mg, 1mg and 2mg orally disintegrating tabs)
ezetimibe (EZETROL® 10mg tabs)	rivastigmine (EXELON® caps), resubmission
fondaparinux sodium (ARIXTRA® 2.5mg injection), resubmission	rofecoxib (VIOXX® 25mg tabs), new indication
galantamine (REMINYL® 4mg, 8mg and 12mg tabs), resubmission	rosiglitazone (AVANDIA® tabs), resubmission
ganciclovir (CYTOVENE® 500mg caps)	tacrolimus (PROTOPIC® 0.03% and 0.1% ointment), resubmission
gefitinib (IRESSA® 250mg tabs) – Common Drug Review	testosterone (ANDRODERM® 24.3mg transdermal deliver system)
interferon beta-1a (AVONEX® 30mcg once a week IM injectable), new indication	tiotropium bromide (SPIRIVA® 18 mcg caps)
irbesartan (AVAPRO® tabs), new indication	trandolapril (MAVIK® 0.5mg capsules)
latanoprost/ timolol maleate (XALACOM® 50 mcg/ml ophthalmic solution), resubmission	ursodiol (URSO® DS 500mg tabs)
levetiracetam (KEPPRA® 250mg, 500mg and 750mg tabs)	vitamin and mineral supplement (DIAPLEX®)
losartan (COZAAR® tabs), new indication	

We regret that we are unable to consider inclusion of these products as eligible benefits under the PharmaCare program until the review process has been completed.

